VIEWING THE WORLD AS AN ORGANISM

WORLD ORDER

MARCH 1938

DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS • HOWARD LUXMORE CARPENTER

MEXICO'S PEACE POET • • • • • BEATRICE IRWIN

THE TURNING POINT • • • ALICE SCHWARZ-SOLIVO

WAR AND HUMAN NATURE • • • • A STATEMENT

THE GOSPEL OF BEAUTY • • • • • ZOE MEYER

Pacific School of Religion Berkeley, Calif.

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CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

MARCH 1938 VOLUME 3 • NUMBER 12

BEYOND THE FACT • EDITORIAL 441

DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS • HOWARD LUXMORE CARPENTER 443

THE WORLD CRISIS, II • MOUNTFORT MILLS 451

WAR AND HUMAN NATURE • SOCIETY FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY 455

MEXICO'S PEACE POET AND KING • BEATRICE IRWIN 457

THE TURNING POINT • ALICE SCHWARZ-SOLIVO 461

PHILOSOPHY AND REVELATION, III • G. A. SHOOK 465

IMMORTALITY OF THE SPIRIT, I • 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ 472

THE GOSPEL OF BEAUTY • ZOE MEYER 474

THE CHALLENGE OF THIS CHANGING WORLD • PEARLE U. EASTERBROOK 476

SIGNS OF THE TIMES • BERTHA HYDE KIRKPATRICK 478

INDEX 480

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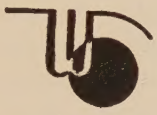

BEYOND THE FACT

EDITORIAL

LOOKING objectively at life about him any one of so-called civilized millions might say that we are alive to the planetary nature of our difficulties but are confounded by the very fact of our inter-relationship and by the storms of reminder that break over us. Our sleep is haunted by man's problems: we cannot move in thought without elbowing humanity. We picture spectral thousands starving in this and that country; watch dark throngs carrying bright banners lettered with this ideology or that. Press, screen and radio bring us too much information about the relative sizes of armaments, of factions. Too many wings are counted; far too many heads are numbered. Much repetition of figures is distracting. If we tag and tally living things, we set them apart from the stream of life. Mass reckoning of human needs lifts—or lowers—us out of immediate concern.

And we are half choked with factual knowledge about the earth and the skies above it. Mountains of the moon are named and the sun-spots are measured. Budgets and balances of nations are reported to us. Industrial chills and fevers are charted. In the pursuit of statistics we are robbed of wonder. Instead of tilting our mirrors at a new-dimensional angle to reflect mysteries, we break through the looking-glass and examine its quicksilver lining. And we are not only conscious of too many things but our sense of proportion, of values, is distorted by emphasis of the trivial.

Religion
Berkeley, Calif.

Where great and small are freakishly confused and things remote overshadow the immediate, true perspective is gone. In headlines of equal size we read,—BABY SWALLOWS PEARL - - - LEAGUE OF NATIONS IN DEATH THROES. The hour before dinner is filled with the crash of bombs falling in Chapei. Out of nowhere we are startled by the ventriloquism of propaganda. And with hardly any surprise we hear the star Arcturus whose light is transposed into music for us on the radio. By electrical device faintest vibrations are magnified, so that the worm boring in the wood is noisy at its work. Whichever way we listen we are lost to all the lovely sounds just below the level of attention, sounds that contribute to inner harmony without demanding any response.

In this world riot small wonder that many men are more aware of the dangers than of the advantages of our newly-conditioned life. But their buffers and defenses are not so much set up against danger as against fear itself. Hate seems to them in a sense protection, for they find that the object of enmity loses immanence and power, turns into a symbol. So images are raised for mass hatred. To a lesser degree any hated individual is only a bogey-man, no more really frightening than the figure in the nursery tale. In the same way the timid find that race and class prejudice serve to transform vast numbers of alarming human creatures into conglomerates. No longer seen as individuals they are menacing only in imagination. Still others driven by too many demands upon their sympathy turn to isolation for escape. As this is not possible to find, they try to insulate themselves from their fellows by setting up transparent barriers that will protect their feelings and yet allow free view of what is going on. But the very nature of the non-conductor brings bewilderment. To the cool observer watching through the window-pane the dance is meaningless. He does not hear the music.

There seems to be no limit to man's stratagems to ease the pressure of proximity. Failing to understand this new relationship his ingenuity has only added to his misery. Obviously proximity of itself does not lead to understanding. The group still turns mob in crisis. Humans thrown into each others arms for the most part wrestle for advantage rather than embrace. We face a threatening paradox — division in closeness. It can be resolved only by turning from the seeming darkness and confusion of the fact to the Light beyond, which reveals every atom in creation to be related in essential harmony.

M.M.

DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS

HOWARD LUXMORE CARPENTER

RANKING with Freud and Adler as one of the foremost of psychological investigators, C. G. Jung is of particular interest to Bahá'ís in regard to our belief in the future establishment of a universal spiritual civilization. Jung is especially distinguished for his avoidance of fanaticism, a quality as common among scientists as among religionists. He at all times avoids the use of rigid formulae in explaining the intricacies of the human mind, pointing out that, strictly speaking, the ramifications of the mind are as protean as the number of minds in the world. Therefore, he draws freely from other investigators without confining himself to the simple rules of any. For example, he maintains that human activity cannot be explained by any simple method learned by routine, such as the pansexualism of Freud or the impulse to self-preservation of Adler; if such formulae only were necessary, any amateur could practice psychiatry. The sensible and balanced and philosophical methods of Jung endear him to the student of human impulses. In the first part of the following paper the work of C. G. Jung[1] has been used largely, and in places his actual phrases are included.

Ella Goodall Cooper in "Psychology from the Spiritual Standpoint"[2] shows the common ground between the Bahá'í Religion and modern psychology as taught by Alfred Adler. This community of interest is especially apparent in the territory of education and psychiatry. She tells how much more effective psychological methods are when their way is illumined by the light of religion. Of particular importance is the precept so closely approaching the Bahá'í idea, voiced by Adler, regarding the social responsibility of people, the realization that life in this world is necessarily communal, and that humanity is fundamentally one. The purpose of the present paper is to trace the development of human consciousness in the individual and in the race, as outlined by Jung, and then to show, in the light of evidence tabulated by Jung, the immense importance of the Bahá'í Cause in assisting man to a station of spiritual civilization in the future, based on consciousness and insight.

Our first premise, according to Jung, must necessarily be that the fundamental biogenic law is equally valid for the development of the human mind as for that of the human

1—C. G. Jung: Contributions to Analytical Psychology, 1928.

2—The Bahá'í Magazine, November, 1929.

body; i. e. just as the embryo in its development repeats the history of the evolution of the species, so also the development of a child's mind repeats the history of the human mind since its beginnings. This theory is well illustrated in Emerson's essay on History. "If the whole of history is in one man, it is all to be explained from individual experience." Again he says: "I can find . . . the genius and creative principle of each and of all eras in my own mind." Or, "The primeval world,—the Fore-World, as the Germans say,—I can dive to it in myself as well as grope for it with researching fingers in catacombs, libraries, and the broken reliefs and torsos of ruined villas."

At birth a child has the ability to distinguish light and dark; in a few hours it can hear fairly well. In a short time it has vision for form and usually in two or three months distinguishes familiar people. The infant's mind, we may say, is unconscious, i. e. it is engaged only in reacting to a few stimuli, without thought or intent. For many months the child is a victim of its environment, and during the early years there is scarcely any consciousness. There is constant psychic activity, but these early processes are not focused in an organized ego. The child has not realized that his mind is an individual psyche; the personality has not as yet become integrated. This can be described as an animal state, a state of complete fusion with surrounding conditions. Therefore, the child identifies himself with his parents, who form the chief constituent of his environment, and does not yet conceive of his mind as different from that of his parents.

The first traces of consciousness appear when the child speaks of himself in the first person at about the third to fifth year. It is noteworthy that before that time he always speaks of himself in the third person and even continues to do that for a time after he has learned the use of "I". From this time on the development of consciousness proceeds rapidly until psychic puberty at about 25 years (20 in the female). At the beginning there is a primitive consciousness and then civilized consciousness. It is not until after psychic puberty that the child's mind is an independent psyche. After psychic puberty further additions to consciousness are acquired more slowly.

THE integration of consciousness is hastened and strengthened by education. Without education children would remain in an unconscious condition, that of the primitive. This would not be stupidity, but instinctive intelligence. Thus we see that culture depends upon a maximum of consciousness; the degree of civilization is equal to man's consciousness.

In describing the difference between consciousness and unconsciousness Jung gives the beautiful analogy that the unconscious is a sea and the conscious is an island rising out of the sea. One must bear in mind, however, that the relationship is not stable. The unconscious contains those psychic factors which have a low degree of intensity or which formerly had intensity and for some reason have lost it. Besides this personal unconscious there is the great collective uncon-

scious which contains inherited instinctual forms, and primordial forms of apprehension, the so-called archetypes or basic images. This is not found in normal persons, but comes to light as primitive mythological thinking in various types of psychic disorders.

Mythology is a normal expression of the activity of the collective unconscious. Emerson as well as Jung holds the interesting idea that mythology represents the first functionings of the human intellect; by mythology is meant a translation of inner experience into the language of pictures, by which translation the primitive man seeks to dominate the supernatural and free himself from primitive anxieties.

The conscious is the ideational complex content of the mind, which is directly associated with the ego. Man, of course, believes that most of his activity is consciously undertaken, but the evidence shows that a great part of his activity and mental content is activitated by the unconscious. If he possessed perfect insight he would realize that his real motives are often instinctive and that he rationalizes his instincts. And Jung and others believe that the rational motivation of our actions is an explanation *a posteriori* rather than a true motivation. By careful training man has succeeded in replacing some instincts with volitional action, but instinct remains as the motive nucleus. This instinct to rationalize instincts serves the purpose of ordinary life. Thus in order to live satisfactorily in the present world it is necessary to have only minimal conscious or volitional activity; the greater portion of man's activity can be carried on instinctively with constant checking back with rational explanations for the various actions.

After observing the steps in the development of a child's mind we may state fairly confidently that the whole history of the human mind has been a struggle to acquire larger blocks of consciousness. The island of consciousness has emerged higher and higher from the sea of the unconscious. This widening of the range of consciousness has been a most painful and laborious achievement, and there is no reason to believe that the final goal has been at all nearly approached. One could say that nothing is more hateful to man than to give up one particle of his unconsciousness. Man is afraid of new ideas —they make him think, and it is much easier to slide along in the old instinctive grooves. To quote Emerson again, who is an able demonstrator of even modern psychological theories: "Beware when the great God lets loose a thinker on this planet. . . . It is as when a conflagration has broken out in a great city, and no man knows what is safe, or where it will end." The world appears as a vast, unknown, forbidding place to the child, and often he is never able to shake off his dependence on the home and venture away to assume his responsibilities. Just so man shrinks from acquiring new ideas. They appear strange and difficult to him, as adding problem to a more or less unproblematical life. He loses sight of the fact that it is only in the problematical life, where

some psychological tension exists, that man is enabled to broaden the scope of his consciousness.

The history of the development of consciousness in the human mind is the history of civilization. Culture consists of the greatest degree of consciousness. Jung holds the view that the greatest changes in human history are to be traced to internal causal conditions, and that they are founded upon internal psychological necessity. External conditions furnish the occasion for the new attitude to become manifest. The process by which man frees himself from primitive anxieties consists in progressive symbol-formation which leads to culture. The true symbol is the expression of an intuitive perception which can, as yet, neither be apprehended better nor expressed differently. It is an attempt to express a thing for which there exists as yet no adequate verbal concept. It is impossible to speak in definite terms of the life after death, and therefore, Christ spoke in parables of the Kingdom of Heaven. To speak of God as the Holy Father expresses an intuitive perception which cannot be brought to consciousness otherwise than as a symbol. Great art is always symbolical work and as such is more stimulating, drives more deeply into us, and, therefore, seldom permits us a purely esthetic enjoyment of it. Our whole life is interwoven with symbols which are compelled to appear by a spirit in us which refuses to accept a life consisting merely of a simple relationship of the ego and the outside world. By a multiplication of symbols the mind is allowed practically unlimited possibility of creative thought, and frees itself from the dullness which characterizes the life lived entirely from the ego.

In recapitulating our material we find that just as the child is born in an animal-like or primitive state of unconsciousness, and acquires more or less consciousness for the first 25 years of life, so mankind has developed from a previous primitive state of unconsciousness by a gradual and laborious accession of consciousness to a state of great culture and civilization. Culture depends upon consciousness and is achieved by progressive symbol-formation. At present psychologists incline toward the belief that most of man's activity is instinctive but that he succeeds *a posteriori* in rationalizing it to appear as volitional. It is not in our province here to discuss the great importance of an understanding of the conscious and unconscious portions of the mind in education or in medical psychology. What we particularly wish to know is how to increase the conscious activity of man, and thereby raise him to a new and remarkable level of civilized life. So much, then, for Jung's valuable work on Contributions to Modern Psychology.

Let us contrast for the moment conscious and unconscious behavior. As an example of almost purely conscious activity we may cite Kant writing his Critique of Pure Reason. Here he had to force away thoughts tinged with any degree of emotion, curb his instinctive impulses, reject all images conjured up by his unconscious mind, and bring such absolute love of logic and truth to bear that he was en-

abled to write down practically pure thought, the product of conscious reasoning.

In sharp contrast to the above example of a man fully, consciously at work let us watch a man caught in the midst of a cataclysmic event, such as a terrific earthquake. He is confronted by a situation where everything that he has always considered stable and lasting is at once convulsed and torn apart. The earth loses all its supporting qualities and prostrates him; the strongest buildings collapse; the totality of the catastrophe is to him wholly unreasonable. There is no possibility that he will be able to bring the power of pure thought and careful reason to bear. In fact, what he is compelled to do is to expel from his mind any such hindrance as conscious reasoning and draw upon every power of his unconscious mind, every instinct, every age-old image of supernatural powers and forces that have terrified mankind since the beginning of time. Every particle of psychical energy is needed to carry out his instinctive impulses. Thus it is that wherever he happens to be, he flees. If he is indoors he flees to the open; if he is outdoors, he dashes in any direction, which may or may not be indoors. Every instinct that warns him to preserve his body from these unreasoning forces of nature takes complete possession of his mind. Perhaps the only person who brings any real amount of conscious activity to bear on the situation is the seismologist who foresaw the earthquake, and is waiting to see the recordings of his instrument.

From analogy, then, we may say that man does not use his power of conscious thought on any problem which is unreasonable. The greater the portion of the situation which is not explainable to his mind, the less will be the degree of conscious treatment of the situation by his mind. If a thing has absolutely no meaning to the mind of a man he cannot treat it consciously; it is, perforce, not material for his conscious mind. He may believe that he is treating it consciously, but, in fact, he is treating it instinctively and rationalizing his instincts. In retrospect, the man who fled from the crumbling building during the earthquake believes that he ran in order to avoid being crushed to death. He loses sight of the possibility that he might have been killed outside by the falling walls. He rationalizes his instinctive behavior, which is entirely different from conscious thought. Only a hypothetical philosopher, indulging in pure thought, would sit unmoved through an earthquake, and his mental content would necessarily consist of an appreciation of the stupendousness of the calamity.

We have shown that culture and civilization depend upon consciousness. Also, it is not difficult to agree that at present, man's unconscious activity greatly outweighs his conscious activity. If we take a business man of America as a fair example of a person well above the average mentality and consciousness, we find that most of his activity is anything but what we have set down as conscious, or the outcome of thought. He eats and sleeps, spends eight hours a day in following more or less of a

routine, and expends his surplus energy in recreation during his spare time. His only thought for the future is to provide enough money for his dependents and his old age. In psychological terms this man is completely fused with his environment. He is doing what other people are doing, and that successfully. He is adjusted; he is normal. However, when old age comes he is forced out of business by young men and shut out from recreation by failing strength. For a time he struggles to take part as before, and in fact we see numerous examples, both in life and in the cinema, of old age foolishly trying to take part in the activities of youth. The final result is a regression to endless reminiscence about the days of his youth. In other words this man has never learned the meaning of pure thought, of consciousness, and of insight. If he had understood these things, he would have prepared for and looked forward to the years of his old age when he would be freed from the struggle for a livelihood and could at last give himself up to the joys of actual thought.

It is by no means my intention to suggest that mankind lacks culture at the present time. Only the pessimist would declare that the world is uncivilized. There has been tremendous advance in civilized life in the past few years, and the recent acquisitions of consciousness have been remarkable when measured by standards for past hundreds of years. It is my purpose to touch here upon scientific research only in so far as it is necessary to point out that great masses of material are constantly being investigated in all branches of science, and that these accumulations are of great value to the individual in his comprehension of life. By means of reasonable hypotheses and theories this material is being made accessible to the conscious mind, and its effect in increasing the range of consciousness in scientific minds is almost inestimable. This material as rapidly as possible is being made accessible through education to all thinking minds. In this way many processes that before seemed intricate and inexplicable to the mind and therefore were accessible only to unconscious or intuitively instinctive mental treatment, are now consciously seen and understood in the light of reason. The effect is still another addition to consciousness laboriously accumulated down through the ages. In such a way each new scientific discovery when viewed sociologically becomes a cultural and civilizing influence, because it adds to man's consciousness.

This leads us to our real problem of materialism as opposed to spirituality in the cultural history of man. It was stated above that we particularly wish to know how to lift man to the highest possible level of civilization. The first purpose of this paper is to show that a state of spiritual consciousness *per se* in man would correspond and be equivalent to his capacity for culture.

It is reasonable to say that all knowledge may be considered secondary to the knowledge of why mankind exists. It is rightly said that if man understood, if he knew the meaning and essence of so infinitesimal a struc-

ture as that of the atom, he would understand the universe. If any man understood why man is living in the world he would not be interested in learning more, for he would have the answer to every problem of mankind. He would know all that it is theoretically possible for him to know and that situation would be a state of absolute consciousness. But we are safe in saying that no man will ever know the full and complete answer to the question of the meaning of creation. In other words, man will never reach full consciousness: such consciousness is possessed only by the Divine Manifestations of God. That, however, is no reason why man should hesitate to acquire the greatest possible degree of consciousness. Granting this, we may inquire whether materialism or spirituality will add more to his conscious mental content.

The materialist, the man who leads the normal, successful, charitable life, as well as the so-called atheist, has no explanation for existence. He understands the basic principles of physics, and so he says that from a coalescence of energy or matter the universe was set in motion. This process is taken to be sufficient explanation for the origin of life. But on close examination it is found that such an explanation really conveys no actual meaning. It would be as meaningful to say merely that the world began; the one phrase contains practically as much thought as the other. It is apparent, then, that here is no solid rock on which unlimited thought processes can be built. A mind attempting to think on the basis of materialism is like a house of numerous rooms, unconnected by passageways, and built on separate small foundations. Such a structure may be strong, useful, and even beautiful, but it can never be as large or as useful or as beautiful as the house constructed on a single, broad foundation. Such a house lacks meaning and integration.

If, then, the phenomenal world has no meaning to the materialist, he is incapable of treating it with his conscious mind. If it resembles the earthquake in that it is unreasoned and meaningless, he is compelled to treat it instinctively. It is not material for conscious volitional thought. He must, perforce, treat the world instinctively, and he may or may not rationalize his instinctive behavior. Perhaps our best example of this materialistic instinctive activity is the European War. In retrospect there are innumerable rationalizations for what happened. In reality it was almost wholly instinctual, and conscious thought had practically no part in it.

In contrast to the situation resulting from materialism, spirituality does give this broad foundation which is so necessary for integrated thinking. It is not intended here to maintain that by understanding spirituality, one may understand all the technicalities of the physical creation. Only infinite wisdom could understand the explanation of the universe, and man's mind is characteristically finite. But a belief in Divinity gives meaning and reason to life, even though it still leaves us without a technical explanation.

If spirituality does anything toward giving man a reason for being, then

he is justified in using it to the greatest possible extent, for it provides him with a valuable starting point for his conscious thinking. It is the trunk which supports and nourishes the numerous thought-branches of his mind. As such, then, it is an integrating factor and of immense importance in the development of consciousness. In the words of Jung, man's belief in spiritual phenomena constantly releases him from the fetters of pure concretism in which his senses would hold him. It is his defense against mere sensationalism (desolating materialism).

ALTHOUGH our conclusion is that spirituality is the greatest civilizing influence, nevertheless the world at present is distinctly materialistic. As it was pointed out above, the materialist is well adjusted to his surroundings. This is a material civilization in which people are living fairly satisfactory lives. And from the standpoint of psychiatry that is all that is necessary to avoid psychoneurosis. To constantly compensate in relation to external conditions usually insures one against insanity. But who would favor mere adjustment when there is the possibility of unlimited progress? There can be little hope for an appreciable advance in civilization on a materialistic basis, for the psychological reasons mentioned above. Materialism and culture are not related.

The Bahá'ís find the new spiritual impetus toward a great civilization in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. There is now a psychological necessity for new religious symbols as avenues for man to escape from his present extraordinarily developed material environment. The old religious symbols are no longer adequate; they are outworn. Man is facing a wholly different psychological situation from that of a hundred years ago. The symbol of a limited sectarian church contains no stimulus, gives no mental enrichment, to a mind that must be socialized in regard to the whole world. Those symbols of the past have carried man to his present state, but new symbols will take him to an actual millenium. There is no reason for trying to rehabilitate the old symbols, for they were meant for only a limited period in the history of mankind. Christ said: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth."

'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote: "Bahá'u'lláh has breathed the Holy Spirit into the dead body of the world, consequently every weak soul is strengthened by these fresh Divine out-breathings . . . every darkened soul will become illumined, every ignorant one will become wise. . . . A new era of Divine consciousness is upon us. The world of humanity is going through a process of transformation. A new race is being developed. The thoughts of human brotherhood are permeating all regions. New ideals are stirring the depths of hearts, and a new spirit of universal consciousness is being profoundly felt by all men."[3]

3—Promulgation of Universal Peace.

THE WORLD CRISIS

MOUNTFORT MILLS

II. ITS CURE

NINETEEN years ago today* the Great War ended. Who that experienced it can forget the emotion of that moment when news of the Armistice came through? How as one man our hearts turned in simple gratitude to God and in wide embrace to all our fellows throughout the world who had suffered so cruelly and so long? Who can forget also, that joined with the deep sigh of ease from pain long borne that breathed forth from every land went forth, too, a great resolve that such a thing should never be again?

The irony of it!

That we, upon this very anniversary day so shortly after, should be seeking ways to stem the threat of even greater woe of the very self-same kind.

The tragedy of it!

What words can say it!

Yet what greater tribute could be paid to the memory of the millions who then gave their lives and to those countless others who must carry bruised or broken bodies to the end than devoted effort to make good that resolve of nineteen years ago, that such a thing shall never be again. May today's remembrances spur and aid our effort now to learn the lessons that our sufferings then failed to understand!

But first it should be recorded that in the light of the Bahá'í teachings the sacrifice of those millions was not in vain. In the talk yesterday upon the cause of the crisis that confronts the world it appeared that, underlying all other influences that contribute to it, was man's failure to understand that unity is the fundamental law of the universe, governing all life. From the altar upon which those millions laid their priceless treasure the flame of that unity did rise and for a while burn brilliantly. The great institution at Geneva is the proof. Noble in conception and marking the most advanced forward movement of all time in the life of collective groups, the League of Nations did raise to a far higher level the conduct of international affairs. In its early days, while its members were still under the spell of the spirit of unity which their joint sufferings had released, it broke down the rigid formalism of dealings at arms length between nations and set up the practice of gathering together face to face in open discussion of their problems, a technique of infinitely greater flexibility and opportunity for

*Armistice Day, 1937. The second of three addresses given over Station WQXR, New York, on November 10, 11 and 12, 1937.

mutual understanding and cooperation; one that went far toward the true unity that would have achieved, according to these teachings, its high purpose of ending war.

In that it has not met the hopes of its founders. But through it the germ of united cooperation that, rightly understood, will ultimately achieve that end was released into the world of human consciousness. Even the great price paid for this may prove not to have been too high.

For, as was foreshadowed yesterday, it is in that germ of unity that lies hidden the cure of the dangers that now threaten mankind. The failure of the League of Nations to put an end to war is an excellent illustration of the futility of measures of the kind, however well intentioned and conceived, that are not based upon that fact. Bahá'u'lláh, the Author of the Bahá'í teachings, states in one of His writings:

"My object is none other than the betterment of the world and the tranquility of its purpose. The well being of mankind, its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established. . . . O ye children of men, the fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race. . . . This is the straight path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation the changes and chances of the world can never impair its strength nor will the revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure."

But, it may well be asked, what hope, if the agonies of the Great War did not teach the lesson, and the mighty effort of the nations through Geneva has well nigh come to naught, with the whole world once more frantically arming against its neighbor on a scale of destruction and at a cost that makes the arms of the Great War seem almost playthings; what hope is there that this unity can be realized? War appears inevitable in human relations. Human nature does not change. We must accept conditions as they are and adjust our lives accordingly.

To this the Bahá'í teachings reply that if the establishment of unity depended upon man's unaided effort then the outlook for security and peace would, indeed, be hopeless. But Bahá'u'lláh assures us that help, not for many long years within his reach and never before in such effectiveness, is today but awaiting his call to come to his aid in every difficulty that lies in his path.

"A new life," He writes, "is in this age stirring within all the peoples of the earth, and yet none hath discovered its cause or perceived its motive."

As was pointed out in yesterday's talk, there is but one source of power in the universe, creative force itself, governed by the law of unity and unceasingly at work in both the visible and the invisible worlds. How little the nature of this force is understood is tragically shown by man's bungling course these past nineteen years. What a perfect parallel that course has been with that of the child spoken of yesterday who persisted in thrusting his tiny hand into the fire and, despite his sufferings, to do so again and again in defiance of the laws of

combustion. So we, despite the agony that our challenge of this law of unity brought upon us, have failed to learn from that terrible experience. In childish wilfulness we persist in ordering our international life in the same old ways of separation and self-seeking, the ways that brought the pain upon us. Again we have thrust our hand into the flame and already the first throbs of the same anguish as before are being felt in the world.

We no longer have the justification for this of childhood, of innocent ignorance.

THESE teachings lay unmistakably clear before our eyes the nature and method of the power that we are defying. As the law of its expression is the same in the visible as in the invisible world the limited capacity which we have shown can probably best observe it where it can be most clearly seen,—in the world of nature. That we can measurably understand.

There we find that progress is attained by movement in cycles, through the annual revolution of the four seasons, during which latent life which has lain dormant through the hard frozen period of winter is quickened into new activity and pressed forward in added growth and expansion to ultimate fruition and harvest. Then there is rest from this stress of gestation and birth and again the intervening period of quiescence, winter, before the next cycle is begun. So, too, in the invisible world, in the areas of consciousness where lie the understanding and directing powers that control human relationships. Here, too, progress is attained in rhythmic cycles, though of vastly greater length than the yearly term in the physical world. But in precise analogy to that world there is in the higher realms of consciousness a springtime, summer, autumn and winter; a time when there is a quickening of latent powers, of coming into awareness of new sensibilities, new sympathies and deeper and wider understanding. This is the period when new inventions are brought to light, when there is a fuller understanding of economic laws and a broader grasp of social philosophy and the right adjustment of human relations. And, invariably, flooding this new understanding, comes increased spiritual perception and illumination. Developing these new powers to the extent of his capacity, under the impulse of this quickening force man advances in the new cycle to the high point of its full fruition and harvest. That point appears to the world as the establishment and enjoyment of a new civilization, with all its material and cultural advance above the point at which it stood when this quickening impulse of spiritual springtime was first felt. Then here, likewise, the strength and vigor that has produced so much relaxes for a time. In form these civilizations begin to yield, to recede from the high standards of their full fruition and gradually to sink back into the hard contracted materialism that is their destruction,—their winter time. This is the record of all the great civilizations of history,—Persian, Hebrew, Greek, Roman, Arabian. And the transcendent power that was silently at work behind each of these mighty

movements is still at work. The rhythmic pulsations in evolution that these civilizations represent are still beating in the heart of the universe. And we are actors in this cosmic drama.

One other figure in this drama must be told of—the central one of all. Just as it is the mounting power of the physical sun that creates and impels the new life of springtime in the world of nature, so it is the rising power of the Sun of the Spirit that quickens life in the higher realms of the soul, symbolized in loving mercy to man's limited vision by the embodiment of this Sun in human form. This is the supreme rôle played by all of the giant spiritual teachers of the past,—the prophets. This is the rôle which Bahá'u'lláh fills today, no greater, no different from the parts taken by his predecessors. It is the same. As the physical sun of next spring will be the same as the sun of this year, so the Light that has illumined each of these towering figures in history is one and the same. It shines upon the world through Bahá'u'lláh today.

From that station, to cheer and encourage the journey that lies before us and that seems so dark today and filled with danger, He tells us that this new life that "is stirring within all peoples" at this time is the force of creative power itself, bursting forth once again, obedient to its law, in all the radiance and quickening joy of a new spiritual springtime; that within the flow of this mighty stream we lie. It follows the law of unity. Until now we have set ourselves against its might. Henceforth, with this new understanding, we can if we but will lay our courses with its current, strike out boldly and be carried forward by its irresistible sweep into that land of security and peace for which those millions we bow before in reverent memory today made the ultimate sacrifice.

This way lies the cure of the world crisis.

From Sa'dí's Rose-Garden

In fulfillment of his vow, a king gave a purse of dirhems to his slave, and bade him divide the sum amongst all the holy men. . . . Each day the slave would set out with the purse, each night he would return and kiss the purse and lay it (still full of gold) before his master; then he would say: "No matter where I sought, I found no holy men." At last the king said: "How can such a thing be? To my knowledge there are four hundred holy men in this city." The slave replied: "O Lord of the world, those who are holy will not take the dirhems, and those who will take them are not holy."

Translated from the Persian by Marzieh Carpenter

WAR AND HUMAN NATURE

A STATEMENT

THE celebration of this Armistice Day, 1937, should not be allowed to pass without a serious consideration by all Americans of the dangers of another war. Of course everybody is opposed to war! But undeclared "wars" are now raging in Europe and in Asia, and no one can deny that we are in a situation which threatens war.

Faced with this grave set of circumstances, many people will say, "war is inevitable; it is part of human nature to have wars."

We,* as psychologists, protest most emphatically against the common belief that wars are necessary results of "human nature." This opinion is without scientific foundation. There is no evidence to justify it. In a recent poll of several hundred American psychologists, all of whom have studied the instinct question thoroughly, over 90 per cent denied that any proof existed for the view that man's instincts lead to war.

Not only is the inevitability of war unsound psychology; it is also a handicap to peace efforts. A person who accepts this belief will ignore practical avenues for the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

To those who believe that man's "aggressive instincts" cause a war, let us ask this question: Whose aggressive instincts? Those of the men who fight the war, or those whose acts lead into the war? There is a confusion of thinking here for many people. Only superficially is a war like two men fighting. When two men get into a *personal* fight, each knows why he is fighting and has the alternative of not fighting if the stakes are not worth his efforts. In case of war, on the other hand, the psychologist sees people fighting who are (for the most part) prevented from knowing the real reasons for the war, and are instead artificially motivated by propaganda composed (as we know now) in many cases of utter falsehoods.

Even if wars were like individual conflicts, the psychologist might still ask the question: Does society tolerate the settling of individual disputes by fighting? It does not. Human beings have accepted courts of law in place of the primitive "eye for an eye." No one frets because his impulses to fight over property, differences of opinion, and such matters, are suppressed. Nor is any harm done to individuals by this interference. Then why should we say that because of human nature nations *must* fight? Psychologists see the possibilities of adequate techniques which can and

*Statement issued by Council of Directors of Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.

should be established to keep the world at peace.

From any viewpoint, the damages of war are tremendous. We, as psychologists, note particularly the great increase in numbers of mental breakdowns, the ruin of many personalities through shocks and strains, the irremediable harm done to those who are mangled and disfigured, the devastation of economic depressions which follow war—these alone are sufficient, we think, to overbalance any conceivable benefits from war.

But we must add to these the great losses of human values, the destruction of our moral standards, which are an inevitable part of war. We spend years teaching our children the sanctity of human life, the rights of other people to freedom of action, possession of property, etc. We punish violators severely. But, as soon as war is declared, we tell young men to kill, maim and hurt other men; to destroy homes and lay waste cities; to bomb and gas women and children. Such actions inevitably leave their marks upon the characters of these men. Indeed, we know from the post-war years that such damage to personalities was done, and that it can never be completely undone.

War is not inevitable, psychologically. It is not part of "human nature." It is fought by men who often do not know why they are fighting, doing things which are repulsive to them but which they have been told they must do. It can be prevented. If we learn how to discount the propaganda of war-makers, and how to insist upon the peaceable adjustment of international conflicts, (as we have upon the peaceable adjustment of individual conflicts), there is no psychological reason for wars to continue.

MEXICO'S PEACE-POET AND KING

BEATRICE IRWIN

AMONG the great names on Mexico's scroll of fame, none stands higher than that of Netzahualcoyotl, King of the flourishing realm of Texcoco and a contemporary of Montezuma. Though his achievements are not featured so much in histories or guide books as those of the great Aztec King, still such data as we have of his record, fires the imagination, because it was in advance of his times, and is in many respects as great an inspiration to the present as it was to the past.

Netzahualcoyotl was a philosopher of beauty and of peace, he abhored war and forbade human sacrifice, encouraging arts and crafts as a path to the peace and prosperity for which his kingdom eventually became famous.

As a child he was hidden in a tree by his father Ixtlixochitl, before a great battle, in which he saw his father killed before his eyes by Tezozomoc, the terrible Chief of Atzcapotzalco.

For a considerable period he was obliged to live a fugitive life hiding in the mountains, and he was captured several times, but ransomed by the women of Texcoco who offered their jewels for his return to the kingdom.

Texcoco is now a small mountain town, twenty-six miles east of Mexico City, and only a faint echo of its former splendor remains.

But still the weavers of Texcoco are considered among the most skillful, because they have protected the taste and purity of their colors and designs against the vulgarity of manufacturing trends and the ornamental exaggerations demanded by tourists.

And so we find the influence of a master mind still making itself felt in this small community which is perched on an eminence overlooking the glorious sweep of the valley of Mexico!

And what a valley it is! Girt with endless tides of mountains that rise and fall and rise again to melt into the stars.

Shining lakes spot the purple hollows of distance, and relieve the eye as it copes with the level immensity of fertile plains rippling away into many colored soils.

It is not surprising to find that this vantage point of natural beauty was selected as a dwelling place, and immortalized in poetry, by Netzahualcoyotl.

We can feel grateful that any of his poems have come down to us, since the missionary zeal of the Spaniards caused them to destroy the famous

library of Texcoco with its picture chronicles and wisdom literature.

I VISITED Texcoco on a breezy June morning, and some impressions of this expedition may be of interest to those who like to leave the beaten track.

Our car hummed along between meadows bright with spring crops and for some distance under avenues of poplar and ash, which are both trees of abundant planting in this country.

The approach was more engaging than the destination, for the present townlet of Texcoco, at first glance, has little architectural or picturesque appeal.

There are neither striking buildings nor glowing markets and the famous weavers have to be hunted for in homely places.

But we were bent on exploring the country of Netzahualcoyotl, not on acquiring possessions, so this fact did not disturb us.

As we slowed down into the narrow street, an Indian youth alighted bird-like on our running board.

The perfection of physical poise that an Indian can maintain at any angle is quite miraculous!

He was ready, and as we found out later, very competent to steer our course without inflicting the wearisome tirades of the professional guide.

We were anxious to see the mountain home of this poet philosopher, and so on we bumped and crawled for about three miles, over uncharted tracks, till we reached Tecotzingo, the former capital of the State.

Now, it is an oasis of market gardens, landscaped horizontally like outstretched arms, on each side of a very wide and partially grass-grown stairway, whose shallow steps have scarcely more than the elevation of a ripple. This is the original stair built by Netzahualcoyotl up the side of the mountain.

A profusion of margarites, blue Egyptian lilies, clove carnations, roses, and aromatic camomile, mingled their red, white and blue in a bright mosaic beneath the dancing shadows of peach, plum and fig trees! This rural and rather unkempt nursery garden sends its produce into the markets of Texcoco and Mexico.

Halfway up the hill we surprised a calm-eyed Indian girl of about fifteen, performing her ablutions at a small spring, with the aid of a polished stone, which seemed to serve a dual purpose of soap and scrub brush. She made no gesture of confusion, only paused and looked at us for a moment quietly, much as a bird or animal does when surprised in some sequestered spot.

Our young guide, Ignacio, walked ahead without glancing to right or left. The naturalness and dignity of these Indians is often a rebuke to our self-conscious civilization.

SOON we began to lose the gracious stairway and gardens, and the hillside became rugged and stony, dramatic rocks of crimson and violet Tezontle, (which is a kind of lava product abundant in Mexico) challenged our endurance, but as Ignacio promised us shrines and ceremonial baths, higher up the mountain, we plodded on companioned by masses of

wild flowers and an endless variety of delicate ferns and lime green lichens, which made ghostly silhouettes upon the great rocks. At last, we reached a wide path encircling the mountain at about a quarter of a mile from its summit, and found ourselves facing a small temple or shrine cut out of the crimson rock. It presented a central elevation which may possibly have served as an altar, but not for human sacrifice, because this custom was forbidden by Netzahualcoyotl, a fact which alone raises his name high above the age in which he lived. From this shrine, again, the valley of Mexico stretched away as far as eye could see in a sublime ease of blue and green and gold.

Perhaps from this eminence the poet philosopher meditated on the majesty of earth's response to those unseen forces which are the basis of the fertility cults and rituals of the Indian races? It is certain at least that this royal dreamer realized many of his visions in works, for in addition to his literary output, he advised and designed the building of a great dike, ten miles long, to protect the city from flood, and divided the lake of Texcoco into two sections. This historic dike is still standing.

He also founded the first academy of music, letters, and art in Texcoco. He was neither politician nor warrior, but a builder of beauty, and he improved the laws of his people to such an extent, that his code for Texcoco was used as a pattern by the surrounding states. In the Indian fashion, all the fine arts flourished in his kingdom, and Texcoco became a great culture center.

Doctor Edgar Hewett in his recent book "Ancient Life In Mexico And Central America" has produced for us some beautiful translations of the poems of this king. The following quotations are taken from his book:

Take the delicious baths of the flowered lakes
With willowed shores of the Mountains of Atloyan.
Whence are loosed the mists which are scattered above us.
And gather in your hands the precious flowers which are found there in continuous bud.
On passing by it sounds to me as if even the rocks were replying to the sweet songs of the flowers.
The clear and murmuring waters respond:
The azure fountain sings, dashes itself to pieces and sings again.
The Cenzontle answers, the coyoltotl is want to accompany them.
Many musical birds scatter their trills as one melody.
They exalt the earth making their sweet voices heard.

These pastoral outpourings of a sensitive and profound soul have a certain kinship with the Psalms of David and even with the Chants of Akhnaton the heretic King of Egypt (1300 B.C.).

Proceeding from the shrine where perhaps these very songs were once chanted, we shortly reached two circular baths, also cut out of solid rock of the mountain, we were amazed at their perfect geometric precision, and by their unusual position on jutting

spurs of the hill. Water was evidently conducted into them by the natural drainage of the rain flow through cleverly angled incisions made in the overhanging rock. This skillful device and the few steps leading down into these small circular baths make them models of engineering admiration, mysteriously achieved by primitive resource and skill. Who shall say what was the original purpose of these baths so dramatically situated in the stately path that encircles the hilltop? But ablutions have always been associated with ceremonial rites, so perhaps, they were the necessary outposts of the temple shrine and used as fonts of symbolic purification?

It is certain that great pageantries of ritual dance and song were held on this mountain, in honor of Sun and Earth.

There is joy in picturing Netzahualcoyotl as a virile bronze garlanded with the flowers which he loved so well, roaming on this hillside of Tecotzingo with an eye and ear open to all the mysteries of nature, and seeking in this royal solitude the inspirations which he translated into works of wonder and service for his fellow-men.

Still in the valley of Texcoco the Indian mothers croon his songs to their babes, and the hillside blooms with the same wildflowers that he loved—crimson, purple, azure, white, and gold, a royal spectrum of undying song:—

Dawn fills the valley with a golden wine,
And all the stars are reaped into the night.
In this hushed hour brown Earth becomes divine
Unfolding flowers swing censers to the Light.

THE TURNING POINT

ALICE SCHWARZ-SOLIVO

LOOKING back over the past thousands of years, examining the course of humanity's evolution, we contemplate a constant play of composition and decomposition, the only constancy being this eternal change.

Empires arose and vanished, dynasties came into power and to their extinction. The world as a whole is in permanent process of development, nature suffers eternally changing seasons, the stars move for ever in cosmically conditioned paths toward spheres of immeasurable distance, obeying everlasting laws. Upon this law rests the universe and evolution of man.

We can but surmise the origin of all existence. This spirit, never to be comprehended, this divine wisdom which at no time can be fathomed, this creative power never to be understood, is apparent to us only in the abundance of an immense wealth, in thousandfold formations. In all creation we find the expression of lawfulness; in the macrocosm as well as in the microcosm; in the vast universe even as in the smallest germ cell invisible to the naked eye. Even though the knowledge of science is able to conceive matter and mind, yet it is beyond all comprehension to answer the question of the origin of life and spirit. How much less are we able to solve the question of the wellspring of eternal essence,—God Himself. For man can never attain unto the realm of the All-Comprising.

To make Himself known to mankind and give cognizance of His eternal being God appoints His messengers, who inform us of His word and will.

A new cycle began with the advent of each of these messengers. With their teachings, guided by God given enlightenment, a new spiritual ascent began, followed by a time of high perfection, a golden age of spiritual expression, and then again a gradual descent set in. Spiritual laws sank ever more into oblivion, leaving behind mere petrified cult of dogmas, or slavish servitude to religious customs. The sacred teachings became devoid of the spirit, the fragrance departed, an estrangement occurred, a God-remoteness, which proved fatal to mankind.

Again such a cycle of culture is closing, the Christian era is coming to completion. Let us look back and view the age of its greatest cultural perfection. Towards the close of the Middle Ages, predominantly in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it was the Christian religion which in-

spired immortal works of art, especially the sculptors and painters, who chose the subjects of their work most frequently from the Bible. At that time art stood at its height as bearer of civilization, extraordinarily so in Italy, to mention only Leonardo da Vinci, Michel Angelo, Raphael and Dante with his Divine Comedy.

The height of spiritual expression in the production of religious works of art was obtained in Germany by painters like Grünewald, Altdorfer, Dürer, and by sculptors and woodcarvers like Tilman Riemenschneider. Churches and Cathedrals of Roman and Gothic style also convey to us a deep religious feeling in the pure lines of their architecture. In much later years the same sincere devotion is expressed in the compositions of Johann Sebastian Bach's music.

Such expression of religious devotion is not to be found in the creations of today. It almost seems as if deep religious feeling, that power of devout absorption in the eternal, had vanished completely.

In Germany literary art attained to great perfection in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, demonstrated by geniuses like Schiller, Goethe, Kant, Fichte and Hegel. The authors of today start from an entirely different point of view which is so evident in modern poetry and philosophy. Today the greatest emphasis is centered on initiative in technology and natural science; never before have inventions and perfections in the field of industry and technics been so stressed and developed.

To the man of today there no longer remains time nor leisure to draw into close communion with the eternal, to place his own reality consciously into connection with daily life, and to harmonize his words with his deeds. How different our deeds may appear before God's face, how far removed from our own self righteous judgment.

Many a new trend of thought is trying to find a way out of this state of spiritual impoverishment; currents of imminent value spring up which earnestly strive to bring about that connection between God and our daily life. All these are paths leading towards God.

All those souls which hunger, all those who sincerely struggle to attain to truth must recognize the redeeming message of the advent of Bahá'u'lláh, they must realize that their longing is appeased, their hearts are made radiant for He establishes the Kingdom of God on earth. In His revelation the urge to find and experience God is satisfied.

A new guidance has been given to us by divine decree, a new path has been shown to us leading upward, again the Almighty Lord speaks to His creatures through the message of a Chosen One, chosen for our era.

The appearance of every divine messenger signifies a turning point in spiritual comprehension, a broader perception of the universe, a deepening of religion, a closer bond between the creator and all visible and invisible, in other words—an approach to eternal truth. Everything we see blossoming forth, everything growing up before our eyes and all that which, though invisible to us, enfolds itself, flowers and ripens, is

truth out of His hands. And truth is fulfillment of life; our hands shall stretch out to grasp this truth because a new spiritual world is before us,—is waiting for us because we need it!

The sun does not need us in order to shine, but we need the sun.

Such a sun is Bahá'u'lláh, the herald of the Bahá'í Faith, who, upon God's command, has sent forth the enkindling rays to enlighten the world and illumine our future.

In recognition of God's boundless grace we celebrate today, with overflowing hearts, the feast of his birthday.[1]

The word of the Prophets of old will be fulfilled under Bahá'u'lláh's sacred guidance. This prophecy promises us that all the religions of this world, which are now fighting each other with devastating fanaticism, will come to a deeper understanding of the belief in God, a belief free from creeds and confessions, disengaged of any priesthood, a faith which will gather all together into one. Bahá'u'lláh's fundamental law is the spiritual oneness of mankind, in spite of the manifold material forms, and the oneness of religion. One God, one humanity, one spiritual command! Justice, truthfulness and trustworthiness: these are the pillars upon which Bahá'u'lláh builds the new world,—His kingdom. He establishes the house of justice, a court of arbitration, which recognizes as superior only the power of God. Through it, in years to come, the nations shall receive protection from all adversity in an honest, unselfish endeavor, according to God's command. In order to obtain a true and permanent world peace He demands friendly discussions among the nations. His advent signifies the remedy for all the religious misery of our times.

The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are essentially religious and spiritual laws so all-comprising that people of all religious faiths can find in them a way to higher development. They enkindle love and adoration for God, and awaken in every soul the desire to prove this devotion by active and sincere neighborly love. Bahá'u'lláh brings to mankind a practical basis on which to build up union standing in direct relation to the imminent need of the present time, and paving the way to a great, all-inclusive civilization of the future. Half buried Christian ideals are being revivified, inspired with a new reality,—for Bahá'u'lláh teaches us self-denial in the interest of others and knowledge of self, to be pure and true, reverent and helpful, grateful and faithful!

The entire further evolution of the nations is founded upon divine ordinance, therefore the peace and safety of all countries rests upon the laws of God's messengers.

Bahá'u'lláh shows us the way to solve the grave economic and judicial problems, to wit: the working together of all for the good of all. Laws have to be drawn up—so He says—which will make it possible to provide harmony, happiness and complete sufficiency for each and everyone through special adaptation to the political and economic relations between individuals and the nations.

He speaks to us of a new law concerning inheritance, of education and

1—An address delivered November 12, 1935. Translated by Olga K. Mills.

of self-education. He addresses an urgent admonition to the press which should stand as a mirror of truth and sincerity, and should not influence people arbitrarily.

We are told that all departments of art, science, industry and commerce, in short all professions are to be understood as service to God. The profession should be to us not support of life but purport of life.

Prayer shall be to us an indispensable duty because it is our expression of love to God!

Bahá'u'lláh commands every Bahá'í to be a loyal, obedient and reliable subject to all authority and never to interfere with politics.

He predicts freedom of the seas and a general uniform currency. At His instigation the first mention was made of one auxiliary language for intercourse all over the world.

Through wise explanations He shows us the complete accord of religion with science, there can be no contradiction as soon as the true principles of religion are understood. He speaks the following words to His disciples: "O ye people of Bahá: Every one of the revealed commands is a strong fortress for the protection of the world. Verily, I desire naught else but your safety and your progress!"

New prospects are opening up for us in all provinces encompassing our earthly existence, and also in those touching on our spiritual life and our immortality. And yet it is no new religion which is brought to us by Bahá'u'lláh, it is the religion that leads to a higher state of spirituality at every advent of a God-Chosen-one, but does not prejudice against the full value of former revelations. The time has come in which Christ has promised His return, meaning that His teachings will come to their full appreciation and to completion in the realm of Bahá'u'lláh. As Christ possessed power over the hearts and minds of men and could change conditions on earth, so has the Almighty Father bestowed upon Bahá'u'lláh the Word to re-vivify humanity with a new spirit. Yea, God bestowed upon him power over all religions, therewith making His word law and his command irresistibly compelling.

Joy shall be ours in the midst of life's unrest, its want of union and its misery, for we have found our center of gravity in the assurance of divine help, in the security of His mercy. Now the time has come when the starving soul finds abundance in the message of Bahá'u'lláh. At such an important turning point have we arrived today, by the boundless grace of God.

PHILOSOPHY AND REVELATION

G. A. SHOOK

III. SCIENCE AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

In this day when inherited religions have failed to supply that spiritual knowledge and certainty demanded both by the generality of mankind and the intelligentsia, we are surrounded on all sides by cults and philosophies which attempt to succeed where religious institutions have apparently failed. These movements are to be commended in that they are breaking away from the past and endeavoring to solve some of our most urgent problems. "The deepest drive of human life," says Wieman, "is to render itself more abundant. To become more abundant means to have access to wider ranges of experience for use and enjoyment. The one supreme and indispensable means to this increase of life is meaning."[1]

But philosophy in the past has failed in its attempt to give meaning to life and it is well to examine its claims today. Its leaning, in some quarters, towards mysticism is surely a long stride away from materialism, but as Greek philosophy degenerated into a closed system which failed to disclose the higher values, although it was elevated above materialism, so may our modern philosophy repeat the same error. If philosophy bases its new claims upon some latent power which is to be realized by combining philosophy and mysticism we should also examine the claims of mysticism. We need not be surprised to find many thoughtful people outside the pale of religion who are mystically inclined.

To begin with, all creative work requires some kind of meditation. One must not only concentrate, bringing to bear all his mental faculties, but all extraneous thoughts must be excluded. The whole personality must be involved. A broad comprehensive view of the problem is absolutely necessary if new relations are to be discovered. In this moment of abstraction, "consciousness as bare event," Dewey calls it, one seems to consult with his own inner reality, rational soul, or spirit. The greatest work of the world requires this kind of reflection. It is superior to ordinary thinking in that it utilizes powers that come from a more universal outlook; something that is not a product of mere training. Without this faculty, moreover, man is not superior to the animal. It is very like the mystical experience in that the mind is not active (in the usual sense) in these moments of re-

1—Wieman: Religious Experience and Scientific Method, p. 339.

flection; for following the period of concentration there comes a moment of mental relaxation. In this state one is able to obtain a more comprehensive view of any problem, moral or ethical. The mind has a better chance to function as it invariably does after one has had a restful sleep. It makes fewer "false" guesses. To most humans this state is as rare as it is valuable and we are apt to read into it more than we should. Leuba has shown by statistics that a solution of an intricate problem often comes to an inventor or scientist after he has dismissed it from his mind. He may not be in a state of abstraction or meditation, he may be just recreating or apparently doing nothing that requires any concentration.

THE positive results that are derived from mental relaxation (letting go) are familiar to all original thinkers. Leuba has pointed out the value of meditation in religion and creative work; but there are three things about meditation that must not be overlooked.

1. In meditation the mind is associated with, or turned toward, some object and that object determines the quality of the meditation. It is true there may be moments when there is very little intellectual activity but it is the direction of the mind, prior to this state, that determines the value of meditation. If the thoughts are upon a high ideal the results will be spiritual, moral or ethical but if they are turned to commonplace objects the results will be commonplace. The mere act of diminishing mental activity does not of itself yield anything profitable. "As a rule, mystical states merely add a supersensuous meaning to the ordinary outward data of consciousness."[2] The thoughts that come to us in meditation are not necessarily valuable; they may be useless or even destructive.

2. In the mystic's moment of meditation he may reach a state where thinking is a minimum and at this point through some extraordinary illumination he may experience a feeling of ecstasy and peace that would not come to him in more reflective moments. Such an "immediate experience," however, though valuable is not knowledge nor would it be mistaken for knowledge even by those philosophers who favor mystical practice.[3]

3. Finally, for the religious mystic the history of religious experience shows that these moments of low mental activity may be positively harmful especially to those who are emotionally unstable; in this condition one is susceptible to suggestions of all kinds. The religious background invariably asserts itself, when mental activity is replaced by mere feeling, directing and interpreting the emotional state.

In the case of a creative thinker this crucial moment, the moment of letting go, may yield results that would not have been obtained had he persisted in concentrating upon his problem. But let us observe that even here the immediate experience, novel perhaps because there is little reflection, is necessary but not sufficient to originality. We must not forget the preliminary training and work of the thinker.

2—James: Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 427.

3—Wieman: op. cit., p. 24.

That is, meditation, contemplation, or what may be called the mystical experience, may help the scientist or inventor to organize his talents and to make the most of his thinking but it cannot make a creative genius out of one who is devoid of originality.

Under the popular definition of mysticism, any one who meditates might be called a mystic but the claims of such "mystics" are too general for analysis and we turn therefore to the older use of the term in order to examine the claims. By mysticism, as already explained, is meant that endeavor to find some subjective method by which the individual soul can transcend its true station and identify itself directly with God. Some authorities use the terms "radical mysticism" or "extreme mysticism" when referring to that philosophy which maintains that the soul may become one with the Absolute, Infinite, or God.

The Christian mystic distinguished between meditation and contemplation. "The function of this first stage, *Meditation,* is to limit the activity of the mind. The second stage, *Contemplation,* involves a greater mental simplification and a cessation of all effort, i.e., complete passivity."[4]

THERE are many modifications of this "extreme" or "radical" mysticism but they all agree that the Infinite, Highest Good, or Ultimate Reality is obtained through the heart unimpaired by the mind. To the mystic, the mind functions in the world of sense and it can never discover the Absolute, or, in the terminology of religion, God. Although the mystic denies that the intellect can assist the soul to attain the presence of the Infinite, nevertheless as a class mystics realize that there must be some metaphysical basis for their belief. "They that are the worshipers of the idol which their imaginations have carved, and who call it Inner Reality such men are in truth accounted among the heathen."[5]

There is, of course, another type which cannot be overlooked; the aesthetic. Here the subject becomes absorbed in the contemplation of the beauty of the world; God is to be seen and experienced everywhere in nature, that is, He is immanent. While the ecstatic enjoyment of this type is closely related to a genuine mystical experience since the subject becomes one with the Infinite, the object of contemplation or adoration is a pantheistic God who reveals Himself in the *beautiful.* He is not the God of prophetic religion who manifests His attributes in a prophet. "Consider the relation between the craftsman and his handiwork, between the painter and his painting. Can it ever be maintained that the work their hands have produced is the same as themselves? By Him Who is the Lord of the Throne above and of earth below! They can be regarded in no other light except as evidences that proclaim the excellence and perfection of their author."[6]

The claims of the religious mystic rest upon "experience" and logical doctrines.

Let us observe first the claims for experience. A few philosophers[7] maintain that the testimony of the mystic, concerning what he sees and

4—Leuba: God or Man?, p. 239.
5—Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 338.
6—Idem., p. 337.
7—Hocking: The Meaning of God in Human Experience, p. 389. James: op. cit., p. 422.

feels in his moments of illumination, should outweigh the arguments of the critics who have never had such experiences. But Leuba has pointed out that many of the things that are supposed to be peculiar to mystical experience such as rapture, unexpectedness, sudden break in the train of thought and feelings, illumination and ineffability are not peculiar to ecstasy with a religious background.[8] Again he warns us that we must distinguish between experience and any inference referred to the experience.[9] We must not confuse sensations, emotions and thoughts with casual explanations. If we have experienced ecstasy no one can doubt the validity of our *experience.* Our testimony is quite sufficient. When, however, we maintain that we were in the presence of God and that our ecstasy proves it, this is manifestly only an inference. Naturally many mystics take refuge in ineffability but this might lead to absurd conclusions.

Leuba recalls the familiar argument which runs like this; if one has seen light, let us say the light of the sun, no one could convince him that he had not seen it. True, but the mystic is not trying to prove that he has had an experience; we accept his own testimony on this. What he is trying to tell us is that he has been in the presence of God, but the only evidence that he can adduce is his experience (ecstasy, rapture) so that in reality what he is trying to convey to us is that his experience proves that he was in the presence of God. The analogy does not hold, however, because the man who has seen the light is not trying to tell us what caused the light. If he should maintain, "I have seen the light and therefore the sun must be shining," then he would be in the position of the mystic. This is an inference about the light which he has seen.

A little reflection, therefore, will show that the experience is not "immediate," that is, the mystic does not "experience" the Infinite, the Absolute or the Divine Essence immediately. His immediate experience is of rapture, ecstasy and his union with the Absolute or Divine Essence is an inference.

The question then arises: if the revelations of the heart are not the result of being in the presence of God, what causes these revelations and how do we account for the fact that they are so effective? Space does not permit even a cursory explanation; the reader is referred to works on the psychology of religious mysticism, especially that of Leuba. Briefly, most of these psychological experiences which are interpreted as Divine Revelations are the results of abnormal suggestability. Leuba shows that this plays an important part in ritualistic, revivalistic, and non-religious types of experiences. Moreover some explanation may be advanced for the effectiveness of these experiences. Briefly, valuable ideas may come to one in a partial trance, state of relaxation.

Leuba also observes that mere experience without meaning, without an object, is inadequate; with the relaxation there must be associated a high ideal.

As we have said, with reference to meditation, the object determines the quality.

8—Leuba: op. cit., p. 217.

9—Ibid., p. 242.

TURNING to the philosophical basis: to begin with, the mystic admits that not all mystical experiences are valid. Says Underhill, "The perceptive power and creative genius of the mystics as of other artists, sometimes goes astray."[10] And then she suggests that some test be made. But we cannot claim that through asceticism, detachment, and mortification we may become one with the Absolute and then apply some test to determine the validity of our experience. To what higher court do we turn to test the experience? Is it higher than our experience? Is *it* infallible?

The mystic assumes, as a fundamental doctrine, that there are two realms of being; God the Infinite or the Absolute and Man. To explain how man may become part of the infinite God, it is necessary to assume that a particle of the Divine Essence exists in man. "What is not in man he cannot know" is an axiom of the Sufis, therefore there must be an infinitesimal part of the Divine in each of us. In the "Words of Paradise" Bahá'u'lláh says, "Those souls (mystic Sufis) have affirmed concerning the stages of 'Divine Unity' that which is the greatest cause of addicting people to idleness and superstition. They have, indeed, removed the distinction and have imagined themselves to be God." To explain man's present position (something inherently different from God and yet containing a part of God) it is also assumed that man preëxisted, that is, man's soul or spirit existed in undifferentiated form with God. There is, of course, a dualism here that was never explained satisfactorily. God is supposed to be transcendent and immanent at the same time. He must be beyond us otherwise we would not strive to reach Him and yet to become one with Him we must be a part of Him.

If we assume that God works and thinks as we do then we might show that we existed in God's mind before we were created and that therefore we preëxisted with God since God's knowledge preëxists. But such postulates have no place in modern scientific thinking. If man cannot fathom the reality of the material world, surely he cannot make any assumption as to the way the creator of the world works.

NONE of these doctrines of mysticism rest upon grounds that modern science could defend since they involve assumptions regarding the nature of the Divine Essence which no modern science would venture to make.

These remarks refer to extreme mysticism which is not prevalent today, but some of the doctrines, like the indwelling of the Divine Spark, appear in many types of modern mysticism. We should also note in passing that the tendency of most mystics, ancient and modern, is away from prophetic religion, revelation.

Although prophetic piety and mysticism, i. e., the effort to become identical with God, strive for the same goal, namely a pure life, they are sharply contrasted. "Mysticism and the religion of revelation are the two opposite tendencies of the higher piety which in history ever repel, yet ever attract each other."[11]

10—Ruhi Afnán: Mysticism and the Bahá'í Revelation, p. 53.

11—Heiler, op. cit., p. 171.

Mysticism is usually a reaction against the superficiality of a decadent civilization. It often reaches its highest point when prophetic religion is at its lowest and consequently it appears superior by comparison. Persons with a strong desire for things spiritual are naturally attracted toward a philosophy of escape, when civilization seems on the verge of collapse and are also repelled by the incrustations of institutional religion.

While mysticism has preserved for us the best in prophetic piety, the contrasts cannot be overlooked. Heiler points out the difference in a few but significant phrases. Prophetic religion is personality-affirming while mysticism is personality-denying. One flees from the world, denies the natural life and ignores history; the other believes in life, values history and endeavors to realize ideals and aims. Of course, pure or absolute mysticism has always been modified by prophetic religion; consequently the type most familiar to the western world possesses warmth and fervor foreign to the east.

The concept of God in either form, however, differs radically from the prophetic ideal. To the mystic the concept of God must be based upon his experience of ecstasy. He may be non-personal, beyond all values, super-good or a loving, personal God, but He is always static and outside of history. To quote Heiler, "The idea of God in the extreme mysticism of the Absolute is merely the speculative interpretation, the metaphysical projection of the experience of ecstasy."[12] The difficulty, of course, lies in the interpretation of the ecstatic experience, and experience in which there is a cessation of normal consciousness. Parenthetically, this ecstatic experience is not to be confused with the normal experience of religious values as in prophetic religion. As Heiler, shows, the God of mysticism is not a revelation in history; God reveals Himself to every man who is prepared to apprehend Him. The birth of Christ, His suffering, His death, indeed the whole history of redemption, is valuable to the mystic only in so far as it prepares him for the mystical experience. A divinely appointed mediator, then, becomes merely a symbol of an infinite Deity. The mystic is, therefore, led to concepts of God which are not only opposed to prophetic religion but to history.

Heiler points out the limitations of mysticism in other fields.[13] Since God reveals Himself directly to the mystic, he is exalted above religious authority. He maintains a similar attitude toward ethics; to the mystic, moral action is not a thing good in itself. Little consideration is given to the social order since mysticism is an esoteric religion designed for a few gifted persons. Neither is mysticism concerned with world civilization, for pure mysticism is hostile to all civilization. In the concept of immortality we see the same non-social, static ideal. Immortality is merely the ecstatic vision of, and union with God.

In conclusion, meditation (or contemplation) is necessary to our spiritual life and to all creative work. Even the mystical experience, the state just beyond the point of meditation where the mind almost ceases to reflect, may assist us in developing

12—Ibid., p. 146.

13—Ibid., Chap. VI.

new ideas or in deriving new relations between old ones.

The value of such an experience, however, depends upon the subject on which the mind reflects and not upon the physical experience. "Mystical states indeed wield no authority due simply to their being mystical states."[14]

The impressions received when the mental activity is a minimum must be judged by the mind in order to be of use and hence cannot be regarded as something that transcends the mind and certainly not as divine revelation.

Again, the psychic experience is not knowledge, although it may be valuable to knowledge.

Insight, intuition, or spiritual perception are not methods of knowledge that are independent of or superior to the mind.

"The conceptions of the devoutest of mystics, the attainments of the most accomplished amongst men, the highest praise which human tongue or pen can render are all the product of man's finite mind and are conditioned by its limitations."[15]

14—James: op. cit., p. 428.

15—Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 62.

I beg of Thee, O my God, by Thy power, and Thy might, and Thy sovereignty, which have embraced all who are in Thy heaven and on Thy earth, to make known unto Thy servants this luminous Way and this straight Path, that they may acknowledge Thy unity and Thy oneness, with a certainty which the imaginations of the doubters will not impair, nor the idle fancies of the wayward obscure. Illumine, O my Lord, the eyes of Thy servants, and brighten their hearts with the splendors of the light of Thy knowledge, that they may apprehend the greatness of this most sublime station, and recognize this most luminous Horizon, that haply the clamor of men may fail to deter them from turning their gaze towards the effulgent light of Thy unity, and to hinder them from setting their faces toward the Horizon of detachment.—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SPIRIT

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

THE immortality of the spirit is mentioned in the Holy Books; it is the fundamental basis of the divine religions. Now punishments and rewards are said to be of two kinds. Firstly, the rewards and punishments of this life; secondly, those of the other world. But the paradise and hell of existence are found in all the worlds of God, whether in this world or in the spiritual heavenly worlds. Gaining these rewards is the gaining of eternal life. That is why Christ said, "Act in such a way that you may find eternal life, and that you may be born of water and the spirit, so that you may enter into the Kingdom."

The rewards of this life are the virtues and perfections which adorn the reality of man. For example, he was dark and becomes luminous, he was ignorant and becomes wise, he was neglectful and becomes vigilant, he was asleep and becomes awakened, he was dead and becomes living, he was blind and becomes a seer, he was deaf and becomes a hearer, he was earthly and becomes heavenly, he was material and becomes spiritual. Through these rewards he gains spiritual birth, and becomes a new creature. He becomes the manifestation of the verse in the Gospel where it is said of the disciples that they were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; that is to say, they were delivered from the animal characteristics and qualities which are the characteristics of human nature, and they became qualified with the divine characteristics, which are the bounty of God; this is the meaning of the second birth. For such people there is no greater torture than being veiled from God, and no more severe punishment than sensual vices, dark qualities, lowness of nature, engrossment in carnal desires. When they are delivered through the light of faith from the darkness of these vices, and become illuminated with the radiance of the sun of reality, and ennobled with all the virtues, they esteem this the greatest reward, and they know it to be the true paradise. In the same way they consider that the spiritual punishment, that is to say the torture and punishment of existence, is to be subjected to the world of nature, to be veiled from God, to be brutal and ignorant, to fall into carnal lusts, to be absorbed in animal frailties; to be characterized with dark qualities, such as falsehood, tyranny, cruelty, attachment to the affairs of the world, and being immersed in satanic ideas; for them, these are the greatest punish-

ments and tortures.

Likewise the rewards of the other world are the eternal life which is clearly mentioned in all the Holy Books, the divine perfections, the eternal bounties, and everlasting felicity. The rewards of the other world are the perfections and the peace obtained in the spiritual worlds after leaving this world; whilst the rewards of this life are the real luminous perfections which are realized in this world, and which are the cause of eternal life, for they are the very progress of existence. It is like the man who passes from the embryonic world to the state of maturity, and becomes the manifestation of these words: "Blessed be God, the best of Creators." The rewards of the other world are peace, the spiritual graces, the various spiritual gifts in the Kingdom of God, the gaining of the desires of the heart and the soul, and the meeting of God in the world of eternity. In the same way the punishments of the other world, that is to say, the torments of the other world, consist in being deprived of the special divine blessings and the absolute bounties, and falling into the lowest degrees of existence. He who is deprived of these divine favors, although he continues after death, is considered as dead by the people of truth.

THE logical proof of the immortality of the spirit is this, that no sign can come from a non-existing thing; that is to say, it is impossible that from absolute non-existence signs should appear, for the signs are the consequence of an existence, and the consequence depends upon the existence of the principle. So, from a non-existing sun no light can radiate, from a non-existing sea no waves appear, from a non-existing cloud no rain falls; a non-existing tree yields no fruit; a non-existing man neither manifests nor produces anything. Therefore as long as signs of existence appear, they are a proof that the possessor of the sign is existent.

Consider that today the Kingdom of Christ exists: from a non-existing king how could such a great kingdom be manifested? How, from a non-existing sea, can the waves mount so high? From a non-existing garden, how can such fragrant breezes be wafted? Reflect that no effect, no trace, no influence remains of any being after its members are dispersed and its elements are decomposed, whether it be a mineral, a vegetable, or an animal. There is only the human reality and the spirit of man which, after the disintegration of the members, dispersing of the particles, and the destruction of the composition, persists and continues to act and to have power.

This question is extremely subtle: consider it attentively. This is a rational proof which we are giving, so that the wise may weigh it in the balance of reason and justice. But if the human spirit will rejoice and be attracted to the Kingdom of God, if the inner sight becomes opened, and the spiritual hearing strengthened, and the spiritual feelings predominant, he will see the immortality of the spirit as clearly as he sees the sun, and the glad tidings and signs of God will encompass him.

(*To be concluded*)

THE GOSPEL OF BEAUTY

ZOE MEYER

Of all the names by which Bahá'u'lláh is designated in the sacred Literature, *The Blessed Beauty* or *The Most Great Beauty* is possibly the most unusual to our western minds. Yet it is the key to the secret of the "abundant life" spoken of by Jesus, the life which bears witness to the truth and efficacy of deeds, rather than words. If mankind would forget all else save the coming of the Most Great Beauty and the significance of His Name, the Golden Age would be assured, now.

Beauty means perfection, balance. To the artist with crayon or paint box it means perfection of line or color, and a balanced composition. To the musician it means perfect harmony. To the artist with words it means a balanced plot or outline; the well-turned word or phrase; the beauty of description or character portrayal which gives life to words.

There is, perhaps, nothing which more quickly brings the nature lover into the Presence of God than the beauty in the world which He imaged and caused to come into being. Who does not experience an uplift at sight of the exquisite tracery of bare twigs against a gray winter sky; of dark branches across a full moon; of a flaming sunset or a blue, blue river? The observer for the time being steps out of self and becomes one with Beauty. And because of the experience he will never again be exactly the same individual.

In Wilmette, clothed in stone, steel and cement stands the tangible beauty of an Idea. Could greater physical perfection be imagined than that lace-like dome against a deep blue summer sky, with swallows darting in and out of the openings where hands seem to clasp at the apex? Yet all this loveliness is but a shadow of the beauty of the Idea, of which the building itself is a symbol—the symbol of that Most Great Beauty and His Message to mankind.

The man, woman or child who lives faithfully the Gospel of Beauty need have no fear of not living the Bahá'í life. Suppose we analyze briefly this so-called Gospel of Beauty.

Beauty is Order, one of the fundamental requisites of successful and satisfactory living. Without it there can be no lasting accomplishment. Keeping a house or a mind in order is living Beauty. Scrubbing a floor or making a bed may be creating Beauty just as surely as is the painting of a picture. Thus is work ennobled and made worship.

An orderly mind accompanied by

a wide tolerance and understanding leads to serenity and poise, and so to beauty of character. A face may lack regularity of line but, illumined with love, it becomes beautiful. For true Beauty shines from within.

Anger, jealousy, procrastination, backbiting, are ugliness, for they manifest the lack of Beauty. So, also, do unkindness, carelessness, thoughtlessness, weakness, dishonesty and all their train of ills. There can be no place for their dark shadows in the life of the follower of the Most Great Beauty. Always He is the Standard.

Justice is a foundation stone in the life of Spirit, or the life of Beauty. Wherever there is injustice, there is ugliness of the worst kind. Only a mind fixed on self is capable of it. Bahá'u'lláh says: "Set before thine eye God's unerring balance and *as one standing in His Presence,* weigh in that balance thine actions, every day, every moment of thy life."[1]

Is it not apparent why the Golden Rule was given as the measuring rod for the activities of man? When he breaks it, he incurs a debt, which *must* at some time be paid, for eventually the balance will be restored. It is a universal law. Bahá'u'lláh writes: "There is no force on earth that can equal in its conquering power the force of justice and wisdom." And in another place: "Be fair to yourselves and to others, that the evidences of justice may be revealed through your deeds, among Our faithful servants."

Beauty is moderation in all things. Lack of moderation in the indulgence of the appetite brings physical pain and the grossness which marks the death of Beauty. On the other hand, what is lovelier than the radiant health induced by clean, moderate living and conforming to physical laws?

Bahá'u'lláh gives us the vision of the Beauty of a government wherein moderation shall reign, in the following instructions to a certain ruler: "Overstep not the bonds of moderation, and deal justly with them that serve thee. . . . . Deal with them with undeviating justice, so that none among them may either suffer want, or be pampered with luxuries. This is but manifest justice."[2]

In the economic world debt is ugliness or lack of balance. When we contract a debt, we receive something for which we make no return. Only by making a return is the balance regained and Beauty re-established in the life of the individual.

Life seems at times hopelessly involved. To be a Bahá'í and "live the life" appears an impossible task; yet in reality it may be sifted down to a very simple formula: Create Beauty. The person who forgets all else, but retains an open mind and lives each moment the Gospel of Beauty need have no fear for his "immortal soul," or fear that he will not fulfill his destiny.

Keeping this formula in mind, his every day tasks will take on new meaning and cease to be drudgery. Life will become an adventure. Peace and joy will take the place of worry and sorrow, for he will see his experiences, large and small, in their proper perspective. Then each moment he will walk in the Presence of the Most Great Beauty and be the recipient of His unerring Guidance.

1—Gleanings: p. 236.

2—Gleanings: pp. 219, 278, 204, 235.

THE CHALLENGE OF THIS CHANGING WORLD

PEARLE U. EASTERBROOK

BEFORE the year 1844 mountain, valley, sea and distance divided man from his kind. Since 1844, due to some mysterious regenerating power, man has rapidly hewn down these barriers and all unknowingly made the world one country and one humanity. Herein lies a great challenge. This challenge is comparable to a diamond with many facets. Man must now exchange ideas, learn to discuss, think, and talk with his kind. His problems have become world problems though we can but wonder how many realize this. If world problems be solved by world citizens, there must be evolved a world language. Thus the need of a universal language is one challenge of this changing world.

From time immemorial religion has been the cause, not only of separation and hatred, but of bloodshed. If men would begin to live together as neighbors upon this wee planet, they must have a religion that interprets God, and the approach to God, in universal terms. It is conceded that we have entered a new era in which science must hold sway. We are rapidly becoming a civilization scientifically motivated. Then of necessity, religion and science must agree. This slowly evolving world state must be trained and informed as to its source, its creation, its goal and its reason for existing. Ignorance must be replaced with knowledge. Through the transmutation of living knowingly, knowledge must become wisdom. All this might be termed the science of living.

God did not create a universe to walk away and leave it. "Creation is one," says Bahá'u'lláh, the Voice of God for this new age. Ponder that. "Creation is one." If this be true, what a world of scientific evolution opens before our wondering gaze! With what awe we reverently look about us!

"Creation is one." If this be true, what about man, his origin, his goal? 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the exemplar and interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh, says, "Man was always a distinct species." God, in His great wisdom, knowing man is now ready to comprehend the science of his being, in order that man might truly become man, sent Bahá'u'lláh to all the worlds of creation to reveal the knowledge for which man is clamoring. What are his questions? What are Bahá'u'lláh's answers?

Man is asking: what is God? What is meant by the Day of Judgment? What of the Resurrection? Where must man turn for authentic knowledge of God, of self, of this baffling world in which man finds himself?

Bahá'u'lláh answers, "God is immeasurably exalted above the strivings of human mind to grasp His Essence, or of human tongue to describe His Mystery. No tie of direct intercourse can ever bind him to the things He hath created, nor can the most abstruse and most remote allusions of His creatures do justice to His Being."[1]

The coming of the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh is the great Day of Judgment. Resurrection is the birth of the individual to spiritual life through the gift of the Holy Spirit, bestowed through the Manifestation of God. This challenge of man's need God has met through the universal religion revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.

WHAT are the tenets of a universal religion? Bahá'ís believe they are the principles which Bahá'u'lláh revealed to a world, long before that world had become conscious of these needs. These principles reiterate the necessity of individual search for truth. Truth, a term rather loosely used by our contemporaneous life, needs redefining. Truth, in the sense used by Bahá'u'lláh, encompasses the fundamental facts of existence that were true centuries ago and shall be true throughout eternity. A universal religion must have as its primary aim the training, development and culture of the human spirit. A universal religion must redefine terms of the spirit, freeing them of human error and religious creeds. Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation defines faith as, "First, conscious knowledge, second, the practise of good deeds." He defines soul as a term applied to "numerous realities according to different conditions wherein it becomes manifest, because of its attachment to matter and the phenomenal world. When it governs the physical functions of the body, it is called the human soul. When it manifests itself as the thinker, the comprehender, it is called the mind. When it soars into the atmosphere of God and travels in the spiritual world, it becomes designated as spirit." The soul then is one power, one force, with three distinct functions.

Bahá'u'lláh defines the Holy Spirit as "the bounty of God and the luminous rays which emanate from the Manifestations." The Manifestations are the Holy Prophets such as Adam, Melchizadek, Moses, Buddha, Jesus and Bahá'u'lláh. "By the power of the Holy Spirit *alone* is man able to progress, for the power of man is limited and the Divine Power is boundless." There is but one way for the human race to progress, according to all divine Educators—that is, by man directing his attention and will to the Manifestation of God appointed for his day.

A universal religion must open the gates of a spiritual world to a world of humanity. A universal religion must teach a technique of cultivating the spiritual life, possible of expression, for every child of God, be he yellow, black or red. A universal religion must bring upon this earth a universal brotherhood of men dedicated to the service and reflection of a universal Father, call Him God, Essence, Divine Source, or Brahma, as you will.

1—Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Edited by BERTHA HYDE KIRKPATRICK

How can the church call men to the worship of one God, if it calls them to rival shrines? How can it claim to bridge the divisions in human society —divisions between Greek and barbarian, bond and free, between black and white, Aryan and non-Aryan, employer and non-employed—if, when men are drawn into it, they find another division has been added to the old ones— . . . ?—THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK. (Quoted in *The Christian Century.*)

The first form of dissension among mankind arises from religious differences. His holiness Bahá'u'lláh has given full teachings to the world which are conducive to fellowship and unity in religion.—'ABDU'L-BAHÁ.

From somewhere in the world there must come, if mankind is to be saved, a call which will be heard by all the governments of the world, demanding that before it is too late and the end has been reached, representatives of the nations shall gather together and make a supreme effort to prevent the appalling disaster which threatens to overwhelm us all.—GEORGE LANSBURY, M. P.

By a general agreement all the nations of the world must disarm simultaneously. . . . The nations of the world must concur with each other concerning this supremely important subject, thus they may abandon together the deadly weapons of human slaughter.—'ABDU'L-BAHÁ.

The supreme care of the statesman should be the well-being of the people.—CORDELL HULL.

Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means of destruction of the human race than on that which conduces to the happiness of mankind.—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

No greater thing could come to our land today than a revival of the spirit of religion—a revival that would sweep through the homes of the nation and stir the hearts of men and women of all faiths to a reassertion of their belief in God and a dedication to his will for themselves and for their world. I doubt if there is any problem —social, political or economic—that would not melt away before the fire of such a spiritual awakening.—FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

The vitality of men's belief in God is dying out in every land; nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it?—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

Wars and rumors of wars, hunger, discouragement, unhappiness and bewilderment seem to be accepted by many as the inevitable lot of man. Disillusionment is giving rise to cynicism, which, in turn, is creating selfishness. So widespread is the crisis that there is no possibility of recovery except by return to the elemental facts of life and religion. . . . Thoughtful leaders are beginning to feel that something is needed to persuade men to believe that this is God's world and that He is in it.—PASTORAL LETTER OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.—GOSPEL OF LUKE 21; 25-28.

. . . Neither hath the world been tranquilized, nor have the hearts of its people been at rest. . . . Its sickness is approaching the stage of utter hopelessness, inasmuch as the true physician is debarred from administering the remedy, whilst unskilled practitioners are regarded with favor, and are accorded full freedom to act. The dust of sedition hath clouded the hearts of men, and blinded their eyes. Ere long they will perceive the consequences of what their hand hath wrought in the Day of God.—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

For Bahá'u'lláh . . . has not only imbued mankind with a new and regenerating Spirit. He has not merely enunciated certain universal principles, or propounded a particular philosophy, however potent, sound and universal these may be. In addition to these He as well as 'Abdu'l-Bahá after Him, have, unlike the Dispensations of the past, clearly and specifically laid down a set of Laws, established definite institutions, and provided for the essentials of a Divine Economy. These are destined to be a pattern for future society, a supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace, and the one agency for the unification of the world, and the proclamation of the reign of righteousness and justice upon the earth.—SHOGHI EFFENDI.

INDEX

WORLD ORDER

Volume III, April, 1937—March, 1938

Titles

ACQUIESCENCE, Poem, by Garreta Busey, 67
ADMONISHMENT, Poem, by Francis A. Kelsey, 269
'ALI, by Marzieh Carpenter, 389
ARC OF ASCENT, THE, by Horace Holley, 361
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, THE HIDDEN WORDS OF, by G. Townshend, 210
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, THE SEVEN VALLEYS BY, by G. Townshend, 341
BEAUTY, THE GOSPEL OF, by Zoe Meyer, 474
BEYOND THE FACT, EDITORIAL, by Marjory Morten, 441
BROTHERHOOD, POEM, by Costes Palamas, 407
CHANGING WORLD, THE CHALLENGE TO THIS, by Pearle U. Easterbrook, 476
CHARACTER, THE TYPES OF, by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 303
CHRISTENDOM, THE UNITY OF, by Shoghi Effendi, 197
CHRISTIAN EUROPEAN CYCLE, BOOK REVIEW, by Helen Inderlied, 274
CHURCH AND THE WORLD, THE, by Hussein Rabbani, 415
CHURCH ORGANIZATION, by G. A. Shook, 29, 62, 103
CIVILIZATION, THE SEED OF, BOOK REVIEW, by Helen Inderlied, 316
CITIZEN OF THE WORLD, by Ruby Lorraine Radford, 243
CITIZENS OF THE WORLD, by Marion Holley, 167
CONSCIOUSNESS, by Dale S. Cole, 87
CONSTITUTIONAL AND CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF WORLD ORDER, by Carl A. Ross, 83
CREATIONAL BOOK, THE, POEM, by Howard Colby Ives, 157
CREATIVE ART, DIVINE ORIGIN OF, by H. Ranzenhofer, 114
DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS, by Howard Luxmore Carpenter, 443
DIVINE PHYSICIAN, THE, by Mamie L. Seto, 134
DIVINE TRUST, THE, EDITORIAL, by Horace Holley, 1
EAST AND WEST, by Agnes Alexander, 345
EAST, THE CULTURAL UNITY OF THE, by V. B. Metta, 299
ECONOMICS AS SOCIAL CREATION, by Horace Holley, 258
EDUCATION FOR A NEW WORLD ORDER, by Genevieve L. Coy, 225
EDUCATION GOES AHEAD, EDITORIAL, by Stanwood Cobb, 281
ERA, A MOST EXCITING, EDITORIAL, by Stanwood Cobb, 41
EXPANDING OUR HORIZONS, EDITORIAL, by Stanwood Cobb, 121
GENIUS AND THE SPIRIT, by I. Ircadia, 145
GIVE AWAY, THE, by Willard W. Beatty, 434
ILLUSTRATION, Dr. Herbert A. Miller, 38; Dr. Inazo Nitobe, 346
IMMORTALITY OF THE SPIRIT, by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 461
IN THE SHADOW OF TOMORROW, BOOK REVIEW, by Helen Campbell, 194
IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN TODAY, by Esther Matson, 109
I WILL COME AGAIN, by Ella C. Quant, 178
LAND OF FOUR FAITHS, THE, by Ruhiyyih Khanum, 43
LANGUAGE AND WORLD UNITY, by Raymond F. Piper, 53, 94
LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER, INTERVIEW, by Martha L. Root, 37
LET ME KNOW LOVE, POEM, by Norman F. MacGregor, Jr., 98
LIFE, THE LABORATORY OF, by Louise D. Boyle, 283
LIVING IN A SOCIAL WORLD, THE ART OF, by Kirtley F. Mather, 403
LOVE IS CREATIVE, EDITORIAL, by Horace Holley, 81
MANIFESTATION, THE, by Albert B. Entzminger, 8
MANKIND THE PRODIGAL, by Alfred E. Lunt, 71
MAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 425
MASTER'S PRESENCE, IN THE, by Inez Greeven, 270
MEXICO'S PEACE POET, by Beatrice Irwin, 457
MIRROR AND THE BLACK STONE, THE, EDITORIAL, by Horace Holley, 241
MORAL EDUCATION, by H. L. Latham, 50
NEW CREATION, THE, by Alice Simmons Cox, 129, 171, 214, 252, 292, 334, 391, 436
NEW LIFE FROM WITHIN, by Mme. Chiang Kai-Shek, 347
NEW SOCIAL PATTERNS, EDITORIAL, by Stanwood Cobb, 401
NEW VIRTUE, A, EDITORIAL, by Marjory Morten, 321

NEXT THIRTY YEARS, THE, by Emeric Sala, 381
PALESTINE, MODERN MIRACLES OF, by Beatrice Irwin, 141
PART AND COUNTERPART, by Dale S. Cole, 323, 386
PEACE REALISTS, by Kenneth Christian, 249
PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE, THE, by Frances Benedict Stewart, 126
PHILOSOPHY AND REVELATION, by G. A. Shook, 372, 427, 465
PRAYER, A, POEM, by Michael D'Andrea, 333
PRECEPT AND PRACTISE, by Dale S. Cole, 189
PROPHETS, SUCCESSION OF THE, by Orcella Rexford, 147
RACE RELATIONS, CHANGING, by Maxwell Miller, 111
RACE, THE HOPE OF THE, by Jose Carlos DeMacedo Soares, 123
RADIANT ACQUIESCENCE, by Orcella Rexford, 220
RELIGION, THE WAY OF, BOOK REVIEW, by Ernest Pye, 235
REVELATION, by Bertha Hyde Kirkpatrick, 314
SA'DI'S ROSE-GARDEN, FROM, translated by Marzieh Carpenter, 433, 454
SCIENCE TO BLAME, IS? by Edward B. Meservey, 3
SHRI KRISHNA, THE FLUTE PLAYED BY, by H. M. Manji, 245
SIGNS OF THE TIMES, ed. by Bertha Hyde Kirkpatrick, 78, 118, 160, 198, 278, 319, 478
SOUL, MIND AND SPIRIT, by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 354
SOUL, MIND AND SPIRIT, by Elsa Russell Blakely, 151
STAR GAZERS, POEM, by Stanton A. Coblentz, 40
SWIFTEST CENTURY, THE, by Garreta Busey, 363
THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY, EDITORIAL, by Horace Holley, 161
THY LAW IS MY DELIGHT, COMPILATION, by Maye Harvey Gift, 138
TILL DEATH DO US PART, by Marzieh Carpenter, 327
TODAY'S SUPREME GIFT, POEM, by Harold Hunt, 326
TO HIM THAT KNOCKETH, COMPILATION, by Maye Harvey Gift, 267
TRANQUILLITY, THE ART OF, by Orcella Rexford, 413
TRUTH AND PROGRESS, by Horace Holley, 99
TRUTH AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, by Horace Holley, 231
TURNING POINT, THE, by Alice Schwarz-Solivo, 461
TWO HOLY SEPULCHERS, by Adelbert Mühlschlegel, 35
UNITY, by Benjamin Schreibman, 163
UNITY OF NATIONS, by Stanwood Cobb, 20
WAR AND HUMAN NATURE, by Directors of Psychological Study of Social Issues, 455
WAR IS ALWAYS WITH US, THE, by David Hofman, 207
WORLD CIVILIZATION, THE NEW FRONTIER OF, by Ralph Tyler Flewelling, 306
WORLD CONCEPTION, A NEW, by Paul Peroff, 203
WORLD CRISIS, THE, by Mountfort Mills, 408, 451
WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, by Mary Collison, 26, 68, 91
WORLD VIEWS, CONFLICTING, by Horace Holley, 356
YEARS OF MY LIFE, THE, by Mary S. Hammond and Harry E. Ford, 185
YOUTH AND CHARACTER, EDITORIAL, by Stanwood Cobb, 201
YOUTH HAS NEW DOCTRINES, by Helen Hardy, 17

Authors

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, The Types of Character, 303; Soul, Mind and Spirit, 354; Man's Knowledge of God, 425; Immortality of the Spirit, 472
ALEXANDER, AGNES, East and West, 345
BEATTY, WILLARD W., The Give Away, 434
BLAKELY, ELSA RUSSELL, Soul, Mind and Spirit, 151
BOYLE, LOUISE D., The Laboratory of Life, 283
BUSEY, GARRETA, Acquiescence, 67; The Swiftest Century, 363
CAMPBELL, HELEN, In the Shadow of Tomorrow, 194
CARPENTER, HOWARD LUXMORE, Divine Consciousness, 443
CARPENTER, MARZIEH, Till Death Do Us Part, 327; 'Ali, 389; From Sa'di's Rose-Garden, 433, 454
CHIANG KAI-SHEK, MME., New Life From Within, 347
CHRISTIAN, KENNETH, Peace Realists, 249
COBB, STANWOOD, Unity of Nations, 20; A Most Exciting Era, 41; Expanding Our Horizons, 121; Youth and Character, 201; Education Goes Ahead, 281; New Social Patterns, 401
COBLENTZ, STANTON A., Star Gazers, 40
COLE, DALE S., Consciousness, 87; Precept

and Practise, 189; Part and Counterpart, 323, 386
COLLISON, MARY, World Order of Bahá-'u'lláh, 26, 68, 91
COY, GENEVIEVE L., Education for a New World Order, 225
COX, ALICE SIMMONS, The New Creation, 129, 171, 214, 252, 292, 334, 391, 436
D'ANDREA, MICHAEL, A Prayer, 333
EASTERBROOK, PEARLE U., The Challenge of This Changing World, 476
ENTZMINGER, ALBERT B., The Manifestation, 8
FLEWELLING, RALPH TYLER, The New Frontier of World Civilization, 306
FORD, HARRY E., The Years of My Life, 185
GIFT, MAYE HARVEY, Thy Law Is My Delight, 138; To Him That Knocketh, 267
GREEVEN, INEZ, In the Master's Presence, 270
HAMMOND, MARY S., The Years of My Life, 185
HARDY, HELEN, Youth Has New Doctrines, 17
HOFMAN, DAVID, War Is Always With Us, 207
HOLLEY, HORACE, The Divine Trust, 1; Love Is Creative, 81; Truth and Progress, 99; Through a Glass Darkly, 161; Truth and the Holy Spirit, 231; The Mirror and the Black Stone, 241; Economics As Social Creation, 258; Conflicting World Views, 356; The Arc of Ascent, 361
HOLLEY, MARION, Citizens of the World, 167
HUNT, HAROLD, Today's Supreme Gift, 326
INDERLIED, HELEN, Christian European Cycle, 274; The Seed of Civilization, 316
IRCADIA, I., Genius and the Spirit, 145
IRWIN, BEATRICE, Modern Miracles of Palestine, 141; Mexico's Peace Poet, 457
IVES, HOWARD COLBY, The Creational Book, 157
KELSEY, FRANCIS A., Admonishment, 269
KIRKPATRICK, BERTHA HYDE, Signs of the Times, 78, 118, 160, 198, 278, 319, 399, 478; Revelation, 314
LATHAM, H. L., Moral Education, 50
LUNT, ALFRED E., Mankind the Prodigal, 71
MACGREGOR, NORMAN F., JR., Let Me Know Love, 98
MANJI, H. J., The Flute Played by Shri Krishna, 245
MATHER, KIRTLEY F., The Art of Living in a Social World, 403
MATSON, ESTHER, It Might Have Been Written Today, 109
MESERVEY, EDWARD B., Is Science to Blame?, 3
METTA, V. B., The Cultural Unity of the East, 299
MEYER, ZOE, The Gospel of Beauty, 474
MILLER, MAXWELL, Changing Race Relations, 111
MILLS, MOUNTFORT, The World Crisis, 408, 451
MORTEN, MARJORY, A New Virtue, 321; Beyond the Fact, 441
MÜHLSCHLEGEL, ALBERT, Two Holy Sepulchers, 35
PALMAS, COSTES, Brotherhood, 407
PEROFF, PAUL, A New World Conception, 203
PIPER, RAYMOND F., Language and World Unity, 53, 94
PYE, ERNEST, The Way of Religion, 235
QUANT, ELLA C., I Will Come Again, 178
RABBANI, HUSSEIN, The Church and the World, 415
RADFORD, LORRAINE, Citizen of the World, 243
RANZENHOFER, H., Divine Origin of Creative Art, 114
REXFORD, ORCELLA, Succession of the Prophets, 147; Radiant Acquiescence, 220; The Art of Tranquillity, 413
ROOT, MARTHA, L., Learning to Live Together, 37
ROSS, CARL A., Constitutional and Cultural Foundations of World Order, 83
RUHIYYIH KHANUM, The Land of Four Faiths, 43
SALA, EMERIC, The Next Thirty Years, 381
SCHREIBMAN, BENJAMIN, Unity, 163
SCHWARZ-SOLIVO, ALICE, The Turning Point, 461
SETO, MAMIE L., The Divine Physician, 134
SHOGHI EFFENDI, The Unity of Christendom, 197
SHOOK, G. A., Church Organization, 29, 62, 103; Philosophy and Revelation, 372, 427, 465
SOARES, JOSE CARLOS DEMACEDO, The Hope of the Race, 123
STEWART, FRANCES BENEDICT, The People's Conference, 126
TOWNSHEND, G., The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh, 210; The Seven Valleys By Bahá'u'lláh, 341